

Promise

by Kare Uta

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Summary: Before leaving for Koushuu Kondo goes to spend some time with Souji. Kondo/Souji. Oneshot.

Promise

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Whether it was Hijikata-san's doing or not, Souji wasn't sure but shortly after his visit with Chizuru announcing their move to Koushuu Kondo came by for a brief visit. Souji wondered, perhaps Hijikata-san wished Souji could talk Kondo out of it also.

But faced now with the man that he admired so much, he let himself and everyone else down, and could only bow his head in shame and apologize.

Kondo only chuckled at him though, "Don't apologize; once you've recovered and feel well enough you can come and join us."

To Kondo who knew nothing of the reality of things could be that optimistic, but Souji knew better. "I'll try to recover in time."

"This war won't finish over night; take your time to get better." Kondo leaned in and kissed his forehead, Souji released a shaky breath the closer they got.

Recently he realized the danger he put Kondo in. He thought that if he just remained by Kondo's side...maybe...just maybe he could make up for what he could have done to him. It would be a while to know...

Kondo lowered his lips to touch Souji's... "You mustn't!" He pulled back suddenly, choking on the exertion of shouting. He broke out into an extreme coughing fit, laying his body down and burying his mouth

in the cloth he pulled out from his sleeve. Kondo reached out and began massaging his back in an effort of soothing the coughs. "Don't touch me..." Souji shoved his hand away the moment he could stop to breathe and speak.

"What's the matter?" Kondo was genuinely concerned, not simply for the sudden fit of coughing that the other had broken into, but Souji's sudden resistance to being kissed, when he expected after about two weeks he would have reacted differently.

I selfishly never thought about him, how it could affect him. I always thought it was a little thing so I didn't care for myself. I didn't think it was... I didn't think I could...

"Forgive me..." He clasped both his hands over his nose and mouth, scrunching his eyes shut tightly.

How can I tell him I'm infected...

"Why are you asking for forgiveness, Souji?" He got a little closer, reaching for his face to lift it, "Please don't cry." He requested, a nervous smile on his face. "I've known all along," he pulled him gently to his chest, allowing him to bury his face into the warmth, "and I've continued to hold you while knowing it."

Souji buried his facing into the older man's chest, resisting his cries turning into sobs that would only complicate matters. His breaths were wheezy and the loudest thing even against Kondo's gentle shushing sounds. The large hands rubbed his back steadily and held him close, deep in the kindest warmth he'd felt. "You're still the same child," Kondo whispered softly, "the child hiding behind the Dojo; battered and bruised and crying." He exhaled softly, leaning over and kissing the boy's hair gently, "And there's me; unable to do anything."

"Please don't blame yourself; this is my own fault."

"How is tuberculosis your own fault?" Kondo asked, curious as to how Souji could possibly blame himself for this.

"Perhaps it's karma of some kind."

"If it's karma then there are thousands that would have to suffer before you, including myself." He held the boy tighter, burying his face in his damp hair, "Perhaps this is my punishment too."

"Don't say that." Souji pulled back, hiding the blood stained cloth in his sleeve. "I will recover as much as possible..." He wasn't lying; he was determined. "I'll come and join you so...until then you have to take care of yourself. Wait for me."

"Of course." Kondo reached over, lifting Souji's head and looking him in the eyes, "I promise I'll wait for you." He leaned closer to press their lips together. Souji quickly looked away, covering his mouth with the palm of his hand. "I want to promise like that." Kondo requested softly, turning Souji back to him and removing his hand. "Will you let me?"

Souji felt the burning in his eyes; how could he turn him away when he... He closed his eyes, resisting the moisture from falling, his

features tensing. He thought that if Kondo really wanted that then he should do it himself. Sure enough, Kondo leaned in and pressed their lips together softly; only after Kondo initiated the deeper kiss could he let himself 'it's alright' and enjoy it as best he could.

Kondo then pulled back slowly, almost regrettably, "I should go now." He removed his haori, warm and thick with his scent, and placed it over Souji's shoulders and burying the other in it.

The younger man looked up with tears in his eyes, his usual cocky smile on his face, "I want to promise like this," he held out his pinky to the other suddenly, "for old times."

Kondo chuckled, amused by Souji's childish ways until the very end. He nodded his head, "For old times." He hooked their fingers together; tighter and tighter until they were satisfied with their silent promise. Over their linked fingers Kondo reached over for one last kiss.

After he left Souji buried himself in the other's scent and warmth, wishing it would last for as long as it took to get him well enough to stand by his side.

It only took a few hours for the warmth to disappear, and it only took Kondo two months to break his promise.

* * *

><p>Because you were here, I was always smiling

_Because you were here, I was always smiling, and crying, and alive
—

Without you here, I have nothing

End
file.